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CHRISTIAN HEALING

AND

THE PEOPLE'S IDEA OF GOD

SERMONS DELIVERED AT BOSTON

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CHRISTIAN HEALING

AND

THE PEOPLE'S IDEA OF GOD

SERMONS DELIVERED AT BOSTON

BY

MARY BAKER EDDY

PASTOR EMERITUS AND AUTHOR OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

Published by The
Trustees under the Will of Mary Baker G. Eddy
BOSTON, U. S. A.

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Authorized Literature of
THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST
in Boston, Massachusetts

MARY BAKER EDDY
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CHRISTIAN HEALING

BY

MARY BAKER EDDY

AUTHOR OF SCIENCE AND HEALTH WITH KEY TO THE SCRIPTURES

A SERMON DELIVERED AT BOSTON

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SERMON

SUBJECT

THE PEOPLE'S IDEA OF GOD

TEXT: *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* — EPHESIANS iv. 5.

EVERY step of progress is a step more spiritual. The great element of reform is not born of human wisdom; it draws not its life from human organizations; rather is it the crumbling away of material elements from reason, the translation of law back to its original language, — Mind, and the final unity between man and God. The footsteps of thought, as they pass from the sensual side of existence to the reality and Soul of all things, are slow, portending a long night to the traveller; but the guardians of the gloom are the angels of His presence, that impart grandeur to the intellectual wrestling and collisions with old-time faiths, as we drift into more spiritual latitudes. The beatings of our heart can be heard; but the ceaseless throbbings and throes of thought are unheard, as it changes from material to spiritual standpoints. Even the pangs of death disappear, accordingly as the understanding that we are spiritual beings here reappears, and

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we learn our capabilities for good, which insures man's continuance and is the true glory of immortality.

The improved theory and practice of religion and of medicine are mainly due to the people's improved views of the Supreme Being. As the finite sense of Deity, based on material conceptions of spiritual being, yields its grosser elements, we shall learn what God is, and what God does. The Hebrew term that gives another letter to the word *God* and makes it *good*, unites Science and Christianity, whereby we learn that God, good, is universal, and the divine Principle, — Life, Truth, Love; and this Principle is learned through goodness, and of Mind instead of matter, of Soul instead of the senses, and by revelation supporting reason. It is the false conceptions of Spirit, based on the evidences gained from the material senses, that make a Christian only in theory, shockingly material in practice, and form its Deity out of the worst human qualities, else of wood or stone.

Such a theory has overturned empires in demoniacal contests over religion. Proportionately as the people's belief of God, in every age, has been dematerialized and unfinited has their Deity become good; no longer a personal tyrant or a molten image, but the divine Life, Truth, and Love, — Life without beginning or ending, Truth without a lapse or error, and Love universal, infinite, eternal. This more perfect idea, held constantly before the people's mind, must have a benign and elevating influence upon the character of nations as well as individuals, and will

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lift man ultimately to the understanding that our ideals form our characters, that as a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." The crudest ideals of speculative theology have made monsters of men; and the ideals of *materia medica* have made helpless invalids and cripples. The eternal roasting amidst noxious vapors; the election of the minority to be saved and the majority to be eternally punished; the wrath of God, to be appeased by the sacrifice and torture of His favorite Son, — are some of the false beliefs that have produced sin, sickness, and death; and then would affirm that these are natural, and that Christianity and Christ-healing are preternatural; yea, that make a mysterious God and a natural devil.

Let us rejoice that the bow of omnipotence already spans the moral heavens with light, and that the more spiritual idea of good and Truth meets the old material thought like a promise upon the cloud, while it inscribes on the thoughts of men at this period a more metaphysical religion founded upon Christian Science. A personal God is based on finite premises, where thought begins wrongly to apprehend the infinite, even the quality or the quantity of eternal good. This limited sense of God as good limits human thought and action in their goodness, and assigns them mortal fetters in the outset. It has implanted in our religions certain unspiritual shifts, such as dependence on personal pardon for salvation, rather than obedience to our Father's demands, whereby we grow out of sin in the way that our Lord has appointed; namely,

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by working out our own salvation. It has given to all systems of *materia medica* nothing but materialism, — more faith in hygiene and drugs than in God. Idolatry sprang from the belief that God is a form, more than an infinite and divine Mind; sin, sickness, and death originated in the belief that Spirit materialized into a body, infinity became finity, or man, and the eternal entered the temporal. Mythology, or the myth of ologies, said that Life, which is infinite and eternal, could enter finite man through his nostrils, and matter become intelligent of good and evil, because a serpent said it. When first good, God, was named a person, and evil another person, the error that a personal God and a personal devil entered into partnership and would form a third person, called material man, obtained expression. But these unspiritual and mysterious ideas of God and man are far from correct.

The glorious Godhead is Life, Truth, and Love, and these three terms for one divine Principle are the three in one that can be understood, and that find no reflection in sinning, sick, and dying mortals. No miracle of grace can make a spiritual mind out of beliefs that are as material as the heathen deities. The pagan priests appointed Apollo and Esculapius the gods of medicine, and they inquired of these heathen deities what drugs to prescribe. Systems of religion and of medicine grown out of such false ideals of the Supreme Being cannot heal the sick and cast out devils, error. Eschewing a materialistic and idolatrous

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theory and practice of medicine and religion, the apostle devoutly recommends the more spiritual Christianity, — "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The prophets and apostles, whose lives are the embodiment of a living faith, have not taken away our Lord, that we know not where they have laid him; they have resurrected a deathless life of love; and into the cold materialisms of dogma and doctrine we look in vain for their more spiritual ideal, the risen Christ, whose *materia medica* and theology were one.

The ideals of primitive Christianity are nigh, even at our door. Truth is not lost in the mists of remoteness or the barbarisms of spiritless codes. The right ideal is not buried, but has risen higher to our mortal sense, and having overcome death and the grave, wrapped in a pure winding-sheet, it sitteth beside the sepulchre in angel form, saying unto us, "Life is God; and our ideal of God has risen above the sod to declare His omnipotence." This white-robed thought points away from matter and doctrine, or dogma, to the diviner sense of Life and Love, — yea, to the Principle that is God, and to the demonstration thereof in healing the sick. Let us then heed this heavenly visitant, and not entertain the angel unawares.

The ego is not self-existent matter animated by mind, but in itself is mind; therefore a Truth-filled mind makes a pure Christianity and a healthy mind and body. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, in a lecture before the Harvard Medical School: "I firmly believe that if the whole *materia medica* could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be

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all the better for mankind and all the worse for the fishes." Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse writes: "I am sick of learned quackery." Dr. Abercrombie, Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, writes: "Medicine is the science of guessing." Dr. James Johnson, Surgeon Extraordinary to the King, says: "I declare my conscientious belief, founded on long observation and reflection, that if there was not a single physician, surgeon, apothecary, man-midwife, chemist, druggist, or drug on the face of the earth, there would be less sickness and less mortality than now obtains." Voltaire says: "The art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature cures the disease."

Believing that man is the victim of his Maker, we naturally fear God more than we love Him; whereas "perfect Love casteth out fear;" but when we learn God aright, we love Him, because He is found altogether lovely. Thus it is that a more spiritual and true ideal of Deity improves the race physically and spiritually. God is no longer a mystery to the Christian Scientist, but a divine Principle, understood in part, because the grand realities of Life and Truth are found destroying sin, sickness, and death; and it should no longer be deemed treason to understand God, when the Scriptures enjoin us to "acquaint now thyself with Him [God], and be at peace;" we should understand something of that great good for which we are to leave all else.

Periods and peoples are characterized by their highest

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or their lowest ideals, by their God and their devil. We are all sculptors, working out our own ideals, and leaving the impress of mind on the body as well as on history and marble, chiselling to higher excellence, or leaving to rot and ruin the mind's ideals. Recognizing this as we ought, we shall turn often from marble to model, from matter to Mind, to beautify and exalt our lives.

"Chisel in hand stood a sculptor-boy,
With his marble block before him;
And his face lit up with a smile of joy
As an angel dream passed o'er him.
He carved the dream on that shapeless stone
With many a sharp incision.
With heaven's own light the sculptor shone, —
He had caught the angel-vision.

"Sculptors of life are we as we stand
With our lives uncarved before us,
Waiting the hour when at God's command
Our life dream passes o'er us.
If we carve it then on the yielding stone
With many a sharp incision,
Its heavenly beauty shall be our own, —
Our lives that angel-vision."

To remove those objects of sense called sickness and disease, we must appeal to mind to improve its subjects and objects of thought, and give to the body those better delineations. Scientific discovery and the inspiration of Truth have taught me that the health and character of man become more or less perfect as his mind-models are more or less spiritual. Because God is Spirit, our thoughts must spiritualize to approach Him, and our methods grow more spiritual to accord with our thoughts. Religion and

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medicine must be dematerialized to present the right idea of Truth; then will this idea cast out error and heal the sick. If changeableness that repenteth itself; partiality that elects some to be saved and others to be lost, or that answers the prayer of one and not of another; if incompetency that cannot heal the sick, or lack of love that will not; if unmercifulness, that for the sins of a few tired years punishes man eternally, — are our conceptions of Deity, we shall bring out these qualities of character in our own lives and extend their influence to others.

Judaism, enjoining the limited and definite form of a national religion, was not more the antithesis of Christianity than are our finite and material conceptions of Deity. Life is God; but we say that Life is carried on through principal processes, and speculate concerning material forces. Mind is supreme; and yet we make more of matter, and lean upon it for health and life. Mind, that governs the universe, governs every action of the body as directly as it moves a planet and controls the muscles of the arm. God grant that the trembling chords of human hope shall again be swept by the divine *Talitha cumi*, "Damsel, I say unto thee, arise." Then shall Christian Science again appear, to light our sepulchres with immortality. We thank our Father that to-day the uncremated fossils of material systems, already charred, are fast fading into ashes; and that man will ere long stop trusting where there is no trust, and gorging his faith with skill proved a million times unskilful.

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Christian Science has one faith, one Lord, one baptism; and this faith builds on Spirit, not matter; and this baptism is the purification of mind, — not an ablution of the body, but tears of repentance, an overflowing love, washing away the motives for sin; yea, it is love leaving self for God. The cool bath may refresh the body, or as compliance with a religious rite may declare one's belief; but it cannot purify his mind, or meet the demands of Love. It is the baptism of Spirit that washes our robes and makes them white in the blood of the Lamb; that bathes us in the life of Truth and the truth of Life. Having one Lord, we shall not be idolaters, dividing our homage and obedience between matter and Spirit; but shall work out our own salvation, after the model of our Father, who never pardons the sin that deserves to be punished and can be destroyed only through suffering.

We ask and receive not, because we "ask amiss;" even dare to invoke the divine aid of Spirit to heal the sick, and then administer drugs with full confidence in their efficacy, showing our greater faith in matter, despite the authority of Jesus that "ye cannot serve two masters."

Silent prayer is a desire, fervent, importunate: here metaphysics is seen to rise above physics, and rest all faith in Spirit, and remove all evidence of any other power than Mind; whereby we learn the great fact that there is no omnipotence, unless omnipotence is the *All*-power. This truth of Deity, understood, destroys discord with the higher and more potent evidences in Christian Science of man's

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harmony and immortality. Thought is the essence of an act, and the stronger element of action; even as steam is more powerful than water, simply because it is more ethereal. Essences are refinements that lose some materiality; and as we struggle through the cold night of physics, matter will become vague, and melt into nothing under the microscope of Mind.

Massachusetts succored a fugitive slave in 1853, and put her humane foot on a tyrannical prohibitory law regulating the practice of medicine in 1880. It were well if the sister States had followed her example and sustained as nobly our constitutional Bill of Rights. Discerning the God-given rights of man, Paul said, "I was free born." Justice and truth make man free, injustice and error enslave him. Mental Science alone grasps the standard of liberty, and battles for man's whole rights, divine as well as human. It assures us, of a verity, that mortal beliefs, and not a law of nature, have made men sinning and sick, — that they alone have fettered free limbs, and marred in mind the model of man.

We possess our own body, and make it harmonious or discordant according to the images that thought reflects upon it. The emancipation of our bodies from sickness will follow the mind's freedom from sin; and, as St. Paul admonishes, we should be "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." The rights of man were vindicated but in a single instance when African slavery was abolished on this continent, yet that hour was a

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prophecy of the full liberty of the sons of God as found in Christian Science. The defenders of the rights of the colored man were scarcely done with their battles before a new abolitionist struck the keynote of higher claims, in which it was found that the feeblest mind, enlightened and spiritualized, can free its body from disease as well as sin; and this victory is achieved, not with bayonet and blood, not by inhuman warfare, but in divine peace.

Above the platform of human rights let us build another staging for diviner claims, — even the supremacy of Soul over sense, wherein man cooperates with and is made subject to his Maker. The lame, the blind, the sick, the sensual, are slaves, and their fetters are gnawing away life and hope; their chains are clasped by the false teachings, false theories, false fears, that enforce new forms of oppression, and are the modern Pharaohs that hold the children of Israel still in bondage. Mortals, *alias* mortal minds, make the laws that govern their bodies, as directly as men pass legislative acts and enact penal codes; while the body, obedient to the legislation of mind, but ignorant of the law of belief, calls its own enactments "laws of matter." The legislators who are greatly responsible for all the woes of mankind are those leaders of public thought who are mistaken in their methods of humanity.

The learned quacks of this period "bind heavy burdens," that they themselves will not touch "with one of their fingers." Scientific guessing conspires unwittingly against the liberty and lives of men. Should we but

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hearken to the higher law of God, we should think for one moment of these divine statutes of God: Let them have "dominion over all the earth." "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." The only law of sickness or death is a law of mortal belief, and infringement on the merciful and just government of God. When this great fact is understood, the spurious, imaginary laws of matter — when matter is not a lawgiver — will be disputed and trampled under the feet of Truth. Deal, then, with this fabulous law as with an inhuman State law; repeal it in mind, and acknowledge only God in all thy ways, — "who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Few there be who know what a power mind is to heal when imbued with the spiritual truth that lifts man above the demands of matter.

As our ideas of Deity advance to truer conceptions, we shall take in the remaining two thirds of God's plan of redemption, — namely, man's salvation from sickness and death. Our blessed Master demonstrated this great truth of healing the sick and raising the dead as God's whole plan, and proved the application of its Principle to human wants. Having faith in drugs and hygienic drills, we lose faith in omnipotence, and give the healing power to matter instead of Spirit. As if Deity would not if He could, or could not if He would, give health to man; when our Father bestows heaven not more willingly than health; for without health there could be no heaven.

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The worshippers of wood and stone have a more material deity, hence a lower order of humanity, than those who believe that God is a personal Spirit. But the worshippers of a person have a lower order of Christianity than he who understands that the Divine Being is more than a person, and can demonstrate in part this great impersonal Life, Truth, and Love, casting out error and healing the sick. This all-important understanding is gained in Christian Science, revealing the one God and His all-power and ever-presence, and the brotherhood of man in unity of Mind and oneness of Principle.

On the startled ear of humanity rings out the iron tread of merciless invaders, putting man to the rack for his conscience, or forcing from the lips of manhood shameful confessions, — Galileo kneeling at the feet of priestcraft, and giving the lie to science. But the lofty faith of the pious Polycarp proved the triumph of mind over the body, when they threatened to let loose the wild beasts upon him, and he replied: "Let them come; I cannot change at once from good to bad." Then they bound him to the stake, set fire to the fagots, and his pure faith went up through the baptism of fire to a higher sense of Life. The infidel was blind who said, "Christianity is fit only for women and weak-minded men." But infidels disagree; for Bonaparte said: "Since ever the history of Christianity was written, the loftiest intellects have had a practical faith in God;" and Daniel Webster said: "My heart has assured and reassured me that Christianity must be a divine reality."

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As our ideas of Deity become more spiritual, we express them by objects more beautiful. To-day we clothe our thoughts of death with flowers laid upon the bier, and in our cemeteries with amaranth blossoms, evergreen leaves, fragrant recesses, cool grottos, smiling fountains, and white monuments. The dismal gray stones of churchyards have crumbled into decay, as our ideas of Life have grown more spiritual; and in place of "bat and owl on the bending stones, are wreaths of immortelles, and white fingers pointing upward." Thus it is that our ideas of divinity form our models of humanity. O Christian Scientist, thou of the church of the new-born; awake to a higher and holier love for God and man; put on the whole armor of Truth; rejoice in hope; be patient in tribulation, — that ye may go to the bed of anguish, and look upon this dream of life in matter, girt with a higher sense of omnipotence; and behold once again the power of divine Life and Love to heal and reinstate man in God's own image and likeness, having "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."

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